



Health Care Provider Education

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- Approximately 40,000 hazardous-waste sites have been reported to the federal government. Additionally, thousands of inadvertent environmental releases of toxics occur each year.
- More than 1,600 hazardous waste sites are included on the National Priorities List (NPL) and are targeted for clean up by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. About 15 million people live within 1 mile of NPL sites.

WHAT HAS ATSDR ACCOMPLISHED?

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) employs a variety of approaches to provide health professional education nationally on environmental medicine and environmental health promotion topics related to toxic substances and their health effects. ATSDR develops and delivers continuing education products such as, its nationally recognized Case Studies in Environmental Medicine, physician grand rounds series, off-site seminars and workshops, national satellite broadcasts, and global Web-based training. These products deliver peer reviewed scientific information and relevant clinical education to health professionals. The focus for ATSDR health professional education activities is on:

- Implementing a national strategy to provide environmental medicine and environmental health promotion training to primary care providers (e.g., physicians, nurses, etc.) and other environmental health professionals (e.g., educators, etc.).
- Expanding and linking ATSDR partnership networks of environmental health expertise (medical clinicians, educators, and toxicologists) to serve the needs of communities concerned with environmental issues (e.g., Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units).

ATSDR often enters into partnerships with other organizations in developing and delivering its health professional education. Partners include national organizations, universities, professional societies, and other federal agencies. ATSDR and its national partner organizations have made progress in increasing awareness of environmental health issues and building capacity to address health related environmental concerns. This has been accomplished by establishing educational infrastructures, developing and distributing high quality educational products, and implementing community health promotion activities and programs. Currently, ATSDR works with several national organizations to advance environmental health professional education that facilitates assistance to individuals, families, and communities dealing with environmental issues. Three cooperative agreements support our national partnership networks and accomplishment of the ATSDR health professional education mandate. ATSDR and its partners have educated more than 12,900 health care professionals in FY05 on a variety of environmental medicine and environmental health promotion topics.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

ATSDR continues to develop electronic (via the Internet) and distance (via satellite broadcast) continuing education and training programs to better meet the needs of health care providers and other health professionals. ATSDR also expects to increase its evaluation education efforts by determining the level of health care professional expertise related to recognizing, diagnosing, and treating exposure-related illness as well as clinical practice adoption of environmental medicine principles and practices.